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NARROW GAUGE RAILROADING in the Rocky Mountains. "Steamy" is a locomotive on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. 28 pages to color plus an exciting story will give children a feeling for railroading as it was on the ex D&RGW line. $1.75. Dave Ulmer, Jr., 1407 Holmes Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

"NORTHWEST SUBURBAN MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT" illus. description of Chicago commuter line. 14 pages total (incl. 8-8x10 pix), spiral bound. $2.60 ppd. Ky. res. add 13¢ sales tax. B. L. Wright, 1400 Valley Drive, Louisville, KY 40213.

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SHARK NOSES and PA's.....$3.50 a year gets you the latest news on the D&H, E-L, CNJ and other Eastern roads in THE BLOCK LINE, the official news bulletin of Tri-State Chapter, NRHS. Issued monthly except July & August. WRITE: Tri-State Chapter NRHS, c/o 210 Perrine Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

WANTED: Original color slide roster shots of any road. Requirements are demanding. No dirty or faded units, or distractions. 50¢ each. Prompt payment or return. Dave Croteau, Box 1016, Colton, CA 92324.

Hi, Joe, this ad is directed to cities and larger, even GO, UMTA. We'll be getting improvement from our modern STREETCARS. We'd get even more from their modern SYSTEMS APPLICATION. That, I the public transit catalyst can expand upon, in our interest of expediting the improvement of low-cost rail transit. I would not go much beyond this in any individual reply, to your serious inquiry which would be accompanied by a nominal fee. The full professional catalysis involves fee worthy of our goal. I am Robert J. Swan, Box 1866, Long Beach CA 90801.

RTN'S EXPRESS ADS cost just 50¢ per line for line of 80 characters and spaces. Display ads are $25 per page (5x8 linches), with smaller sizes priced proportionally. Write: MESSAGE MEDIA- RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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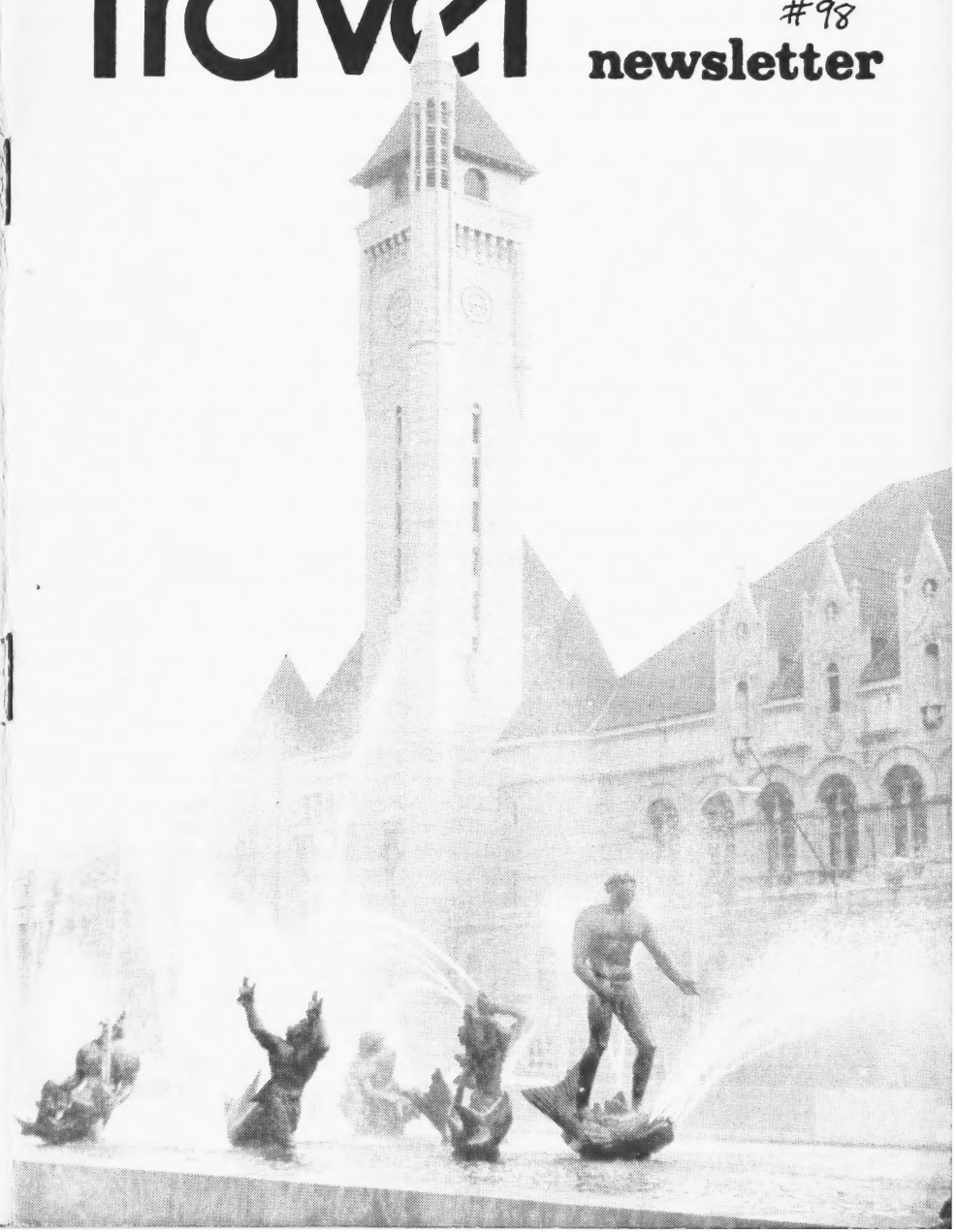
rail travel newsletter

30¢

VOL. 4 NO. 24
SECOND ISSUE OF
DECEMBER 1974
#98



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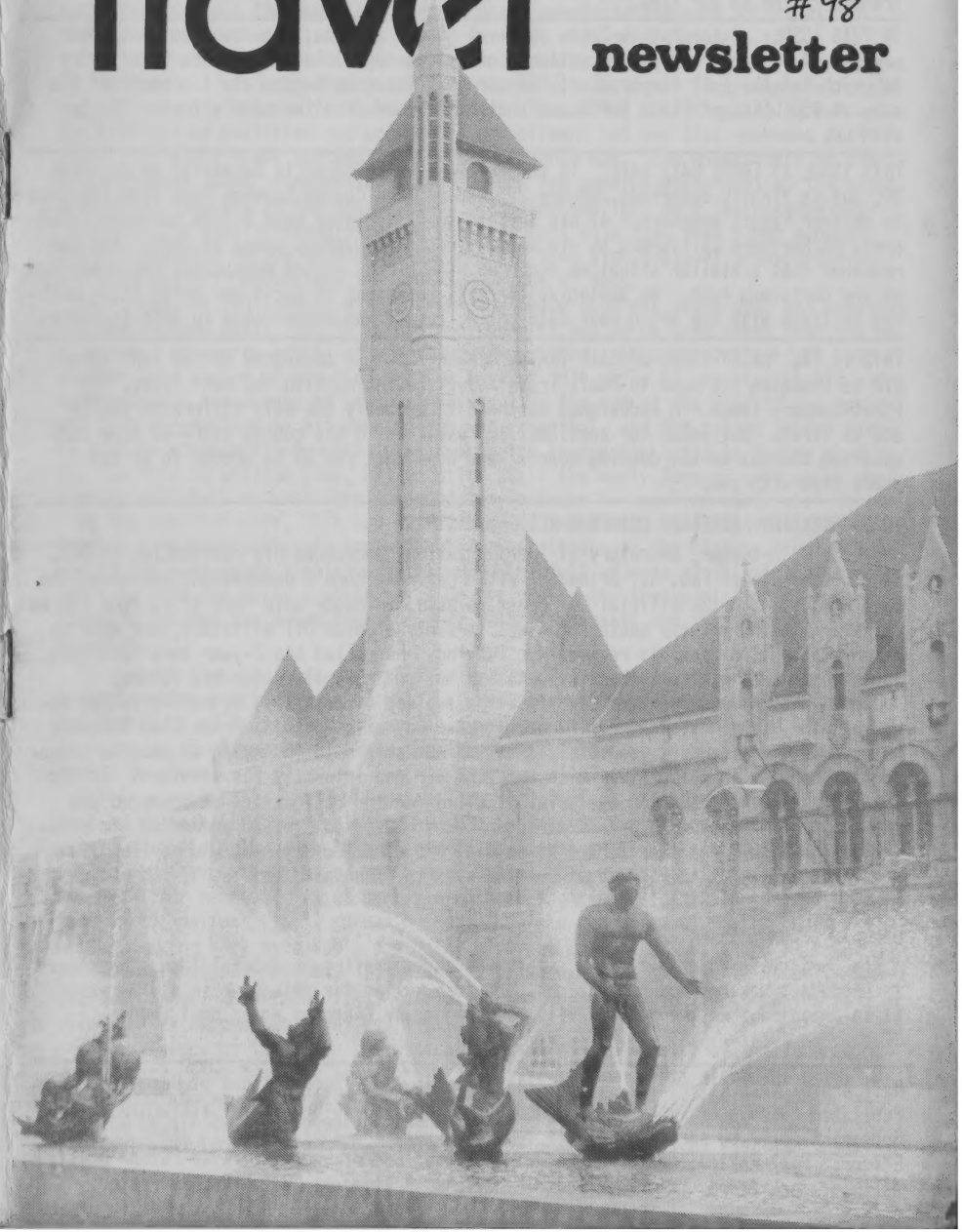

ON THE COVER:

In the middle of America, a soaring tribute to the finest mode of travel: St. Louis Union Station, with fountains playing, photographed by Peter Putnam Bretz. A fitting symbol to end one year and open a new one, a year in which travel is a whole new ball game. Coming shortly are a new Secretary of Transportation, a new President of Amtrak, new restrictions on highway travel. A year in which to watch the trains closely and put in your two cents' worth in the struggle to achieve fine travel and transportation in our time.

IN THIS ISSUE: Peter Putnam Bretz takes us across America, from West to East, the reverse of Horace Greeley's direction, on his journey to Amtrak headquarters to try to psych out the rail corporation. In our next issue we begin Pete's account of his stay at 955 L'Enfant Plaza North and what he learned from the people there. Do be with us.

THIS ISSUE IS THREE DAYS LATE. It was originally scheduled to be mailed on December 30, but is finally departing January 2. Reason: the Postal Service took five (5) days to deliver Pete's manuscript of his article that starts on page 5 from Southern California to Northern California by air mail. That's an average speed of 4mph. You may remember that a similar situation occurred with a Paul Rayton manuscript two years ago at the Christmas rush. We apologize for this lateness; it hurts our pride to be mailing an issue with the wrong year date on it, but it was unavoidable in this instance.

THIS IS THE "LAST" ISSUE OF RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER. As announced in the last issue, RTN is changing its name to "Rail Travel News" beginning with the next issue, the First January issue. A redesigned masthead is probably the only difference you'll see at first. But watch for continual improvements in the coming year--we have some exciting changes on the drawing boards, and hope that you'll be around so we can share them with you.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY BRINEGAR RESIGNS HIS POST

Claude S. Brinegar, Secretary of Transportation, announced his resignation on Dec. 18, to take effect Feb. 1. Brinegar, with President Ford's permission, announced the move himself. In the official DOT press release, Brinegar said "now it is time for me to return to the private sector" (he was formerly a Union Oil official), but gave no other elaboration upon his reasons for leaving. He called his 2-year term "exciting, educational and, at times, hectic." He has not yet made plans for his future.

During his tenure, Brinegar was often the subject of criticism by rail-oriented observers for his dim view of rail travel. Last May at a National Press Club luncheon he uttered the remark, "I seriously question Amtrak's role in trying to provide cross-country service in competition with our fine air and intercity bus service." In the Second May, 1974 issue, RTN editorially called for the resignation of Brinegar and the replacement of Amtrak president Roger Lewis (Lewis on Nov. 20 announced his pending resignation). Another former Nixon man, OMB director Roy Ash, who earlier figured prominently in Amtrak budget-cutting efforts, announced on Dec. 17 his resignation, also to take effect February 1.

BILL TO UPGRADE TRACK IS DELAYED

The Surface Transportation Act, which would give railroads federal loan guarantees to upgrade track and buy new freight cars, was killed for this year in mid-December. It is expected that the measure will be taken up by Congress again next year.

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EDITORIAL

Greetings and best wishes for the holiday season, and for the coming new yea
As we reach the close of another year, we look back upon the events behind us
take stock of where we're going and what may be in store for the American trav
in the months and years to come. In one of the January issues we will publish
annual review of the major rail travel events of the past year, but now we offe
our thoughts about the overall trend of recent events in the area of travel an
transportation, and particularly in our favorite mode of travel.

One thing should be quite apparent to Americans by now--that transportation
at the heart of our economic system. Our wasteful use of oil in transportatio
now a first-rate dilemma in the nation and in the world, bringing with it not
the problems of pollution and ecological despoilment but now also enormous dif
culties of world trade and even the threat of world war. The uncertainty of c
tions at home leads to economic recession, and the painful adjustment of the g
automobile industry to the necessity of producing smaller, more fuel-economica
cars leads to massive unemployment which hits hard at a time when other economi
factors are also on the downturn. We are told that high costs of transportatio
are even heavily responsible for the high prices of food.

Seers saw the foolishness of our over-dependence upon oil years ago, but inac
reigned supreme until just 14 months ago, when it had to be made known that the
tion faced an energy crisis of startling proportions. Then Washington fell int
another long period of inaction through most of 1974 while it occupied itself w
Watergate and the change of administrations. By the end of the year it was app
ent that a reduction in oil consumption was essential, and the nation waited we
in a state of uncertainty while weak Washington leadership tried to decide what
do. As this is written (Dec. 22) we still await the early January word which p
sumably will tell us what form the mandatory cutback in gasoline usage will tak

On the positive side, 1974 saw the passage of important legislation to fund m
transit more generously, to break for the first time into the highway trust fun
and to increase funds available to Amtrak. The full effects of this legislatio
won't be seen for quite a while yet. On the whole, the transportation picture
looks better for the urban commuter, but still inadequate for the intercity rai
traveler.

* * *

In a short time new leaders will take over two of the nation's most important
transportation positions: there will be a new Secretary of Transportation and a
new President of Amtrak (see news item elsewhere this issue). We would like no
to bring up some important points that these new people--whoever they may be--
should consider.

Rather surprisingly, it would appear, we find that at the present time satis-
faction among rail observers with Amtrak's nationwide system has reached a new
point. Surprising because Amtrak's fortunes are at an all-time high. What is
reason for this outpouring of venom upon Amtrak that we see in letters to the e
tor and other sources? Is it merely displaced anger about general economic pro
lems in the nation? Is it caused by Roger Lewis's announcement of impending re
nation, making more acceptable a display of overt criticism? We think it isn't
just these reasons. Rather, it's largely because Amtrak has really begun to s
its own course, as witness its 5-year plan, and observers can see where the rail
situation is headed--and they don't like it.

The influence of the Nixon administration, and more generally of the federal
bureaucracy, upon Amtrak's long-term plans is felt strongly as a gradual move
toward unglamorous uniformity in rail travel. Sure, Amtrak is making steady im-
provements all over the country; there has been a steady rise in new train serv-
ices all year long, and new equipment is being ordered and plans made for track

(continued on page 18)

NARP GETS A NEW PRESIDENT

Former Amtrak Director of Congressional Relations, Orren Beaty, takes over Jan. 1 as President and Executive Director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, replacing the resigning Anthony Haswell, who will remain on as a regional director. Haswell, widely credited with almost single-handedly saving American rail travel from extinction, is sometimes called the Ralph Nader of the passenger train. He was a major force in getting thru the legislation that created Amtrak. He leaves NARP, having spent over a half-million dollars of his own funds on the consumer passenger train effort.

A DERAILMENT OF THE BROADWAY LIMITED

The eastbound BROADWAY LIMITED derailed at Thompsontown, Pennsylvania, 40 miles northwest of Harrisburg, along the Juniata River on Dec. 28. The incident occurred at 8:48am. There were about 41 minor injuries. The 17-car train ended up with the last 12 cars leaving the tracks, and 9 of them resting against a high embankment that prevented them from tipping over. The first 5 cars continued on their journey while 6 buses carted off the remaining passengers. There were 430 passengers aboard the crack streamliner when it, for reasons undiscovered, left the PC tracks.

In other train accident news, a northbound Florida train, apparently the SILVER STAR, sliced thru an empty freight train about a mile from the Amtrak station in Jacksonville, FL. This happened late on Nov. 29, with 213 passengers aboard. No passengers were injured, but two railroad employees received minor injuries.

At Kingston, Ontario on Dec. 21 a passenger train and a freight crashed head-on, killing two crewmen and a woman passenger, and injuring 50 persons, 2 of them seriously. We have no other information at this time.

High winds in the Beverly Gap of the Columbia River were apparently responsible for the derailment of an eastbound Milwaukee Road freight the evening of Dec. 20 as it crossed the Columbia River in eastern Washington. The wind blew 23 cars off a mile-long trestle, into the river. This occurred on the route used by the domeliner OLYMPIAN HIAWATHA until May, 1961.

RAIL STRIKE THREAT LOOMS

The Sheet Metal Workers Union will be free to strike Jan. 15 if progress has not been made in talks that will resume on Jan. 8. A strike would bring on a nationwide closedown of rail service.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY PROPOSES PASSENGER TRAIN CUTBACKS

Southern Railway on Dec. 17 revealed its plans for its non-Amtrak passenger trains in 1975. The Washington-Lynchburg trains (#7-8) are to be dropped. The SOUTHERN CRESCENT will have service only tri-weekly on its Atlanta-Birmingham segment. The PIEDMONT's route will be cut back to run only Washington-Charlotte. Trains 3-4, the scenic Salisbury-Asheville, NC run, will be terminated. These changes must win the approval of the ICC (for interstate runs) or state agencies in the case of intra-state service. On Dec. 24 the SOUTHERN CRESCENT (train 2) was observed at Washington with the following all-stainless steel consist: E-8 units 6910, 6915, 6904, 6905; 704 coach-baggage-dorm-lounge combine; coaches 833, 825, 844, 827, 3787, 3788, 822; 3869 diner; sleepers "Yadkin River," "St. Johns River," "Tye River"; sleeper-lounge "Crescent Harbor"; and coaches 829, 845, and 664 "Ft. Ogelthorpe."

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"...the proposed Canadian Passenger Transport Corporation, which the Liberals promised during the election campaign to create, is in limbo. Mr. Marchand says this Crown corporation will not be necessary if CNR and CPR are willing to co-operate with the Government. If they don't, he will go ahead with the CPTC. Whichever it is, the Government's direction--more and better passenger service--is clear."

--Geoffrey Stevens in Toronto Globe & Mail, Dec. 12

OFF

by PETER PUTNAM BRETZ
all photos by the author

To Amtrak Headquarters

On November 15, 1974, I again found myself at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, the grand Spanish lady known as that since its completion in 1939. Now, Amtrak calls it LAX-UD and so it shall be.

My trip began, like so many others, not here in LAX-UD but at Oxnard, on the COAST STARLIGHT's last leg into L.A. Today's train had a coach with no lights or a/c, plus electrical smoke inside. Also a number of passengers were complaining because the food service shut down at Oxnard. Actually, the diner is supposed to stop serving by then, but the snack-bar (rec-lounge) should serve all the way into L.A. as the crew is getting paid to stay open. Train was well filled, as always on #11-12. Wanting to look out the rear, I discovered private car "Nomad" hooked on. Mmmmmm? That belongs to Great Western Tours, Inc. Sure enough, a platform check at LAX revealed six GWT cars filled with happy passengers beginning their adventure, too. In fact, folks were eating in the diner while it was switched at the terminal.

I now got up from my seat in the waiting room and walked over to the area I've always wanted to use---the Crew Check-in window. "Ah, yes, Mr. Bretz, we have your vouchers right here." These were courtesy of Amtrak, who was providing my transportation to visit Corporate Headquarters in Washington, D.C., as their guest. The conversation I had had a few weeks ago ended by my asking: "May I have my choice of routes?" "Yes, Pete, go any way you want; just make sure it's the off season." Visions of sugar plums danced in my head, but sane reasoning prevailed, and I selected a reasonable, if uncommon routing. Now the chief ticket agent was meticulously making out a one-coupon pass ticket for each leg of my journey. Los Angeles-San Antonio; San Antonio-St. Louis: St. Louis-Chicago; Chicago-Washington. Because of space scarcity, I was assigned Bedroom F in car 232 for the first portion of my trip.

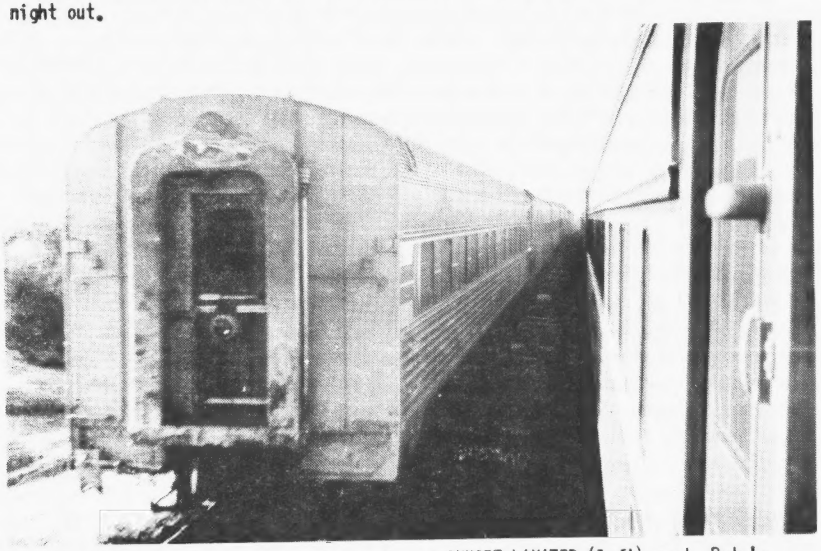
Earlier, I'd examined the darkened consist of #2, the SUNSET LIMITED. There were three sleepers: "Blue Grove" (ex-Santa Fe, ten Rmt, 3 DBR, 2 Cpt); Amtrak 2402, refurbished but not named; and "Pacific Cove," an ex-UP 10-6. Which one was car 232? I didn't want "Blue Grove." The 2402 looked intriguing, but the book revealing its name was buried in my suitcase. "Your attention, please, All sleeping car passengers for train #2, the SUNSET LIMITED, please check in at Gate E." A quick review of the diagram placed me in #2402. Topside, Mr. Bookman, the red-jacketed porter, took my bags to bedroom F while I leafed through the list I'd dug out. #2402 is one of 15 "River" series GN cars of which Amtrak bought 3. It was built in 1950 by P-S as a 4-sec, 1-Cpt, 7 Dp Rmt, 3 DBR, but the Great Northern tore out the sections in 1963 and added four more bedrooms, making it a 1-7-7 which Amtrak sells as 8-7. And it was my favorite name: "Bois De Sioux River."

My mood was high as I noted the rest of the train: Amtrak engines 566 & 553; baggage 1038; high-level chair cars 9911, 9932, 9919; 3393 (dorm-lounge); diner 8038 (36-seat, Budd 1942); and the 3 sleepers. All the train except the last two

pullmans were ex-Santa Fe. And a surprise. Hooked on behind "Pacific Cove" were the six Great Western cars, all in Amtrak colors, not as pretty as their old Big Sky Blue. I noted the cars. In addition to "Nomad" there were "Imperial Sands", "Redwood", "Silver Canyon," & "Golden Gate." That made a nice 15-car train.

At 9:00 pm., we began with an almost imperceptible movement. A smooth start for an event-filled cross-country trip. I secured a 7-Up amid garish purple and watched the lights of Alhambra slip away. Coming in to Pomona, I looked off toward the darkened hill of Cal Poly College, where for many years I used to watch the "Sunset-Golden State" glide by with Rock Island Pullmans. I detrained at the SP Pomona station for old time's sake. A few patrons joined the GWT tour at this point.

"Whang-whang," a step up into the vestibule and 1,436 miles to go in "Bois De Sioux River." I played with the lights and controls in the bedroom. Last year, I had also taken the SUNSET and had experienced a non-air conditioned, sealed-window diner on the train. Two days of sweating followed. What would happen this time? The old villain, SP 10211 (Amtrak 8061) is currently running on the FLORIDIAN -- far away. I tossed and bounced most of the night, not really enjoying my bedroom the first night out.



TWO SUNSETS: Train No. 1, the westbound SUNSET LIMITED (left) meets Pete's No. 2 at Strauss, New Mexico.

I woke up next morning at the usual place, just east of Mesa, Arizona. As we passed the Casa Grande National Monument, which can be seen from the train, I strode into the diner for the first of many Amtrak breakfasts. There were no tablecloths, just Amtrak placemats. However, the diner was cool and comfortable. And, in accordance with the present Amtrak policy, my personal check was accepted for payment. The air was warm, but pleasant at Tucson, as I got off to check still another addition to our train. This was SP business car #117, "Tucson," the private car of Div. Super. R.O. Coltrin. I stood near the back steps chatting with a brakeman. Informed that Mr. Coltrin was not aboard, I waited for the porter-butler to get back so I could take a quick tour. Meantime, why here's a woman opening the back door and coming out onto

the open observation platform and looking around. "Oh my, isn't this car nice. The tours have certainly provided for everything." She was disappointed to find out otherwise. Time marched on, and up the train step stools were removed. The porter approached briskly, and I offered my card and asked for a visit. He at first refused, but the "all aboard" down the train changed his mind as I was "forced" to get on there. I stepped up into the "solarium" section. Two very comfortable chairs faced the rear windows, one with a train telephone next to it. I sat and "worked" at the little desk below the windows as we took off through the yards. "...crackle..buzz..Tower to engineer#2." ...."Number2" ....squelch. "O.K. to highball, see ya later...hhhmmmm... squelch.."

I inspected the rest of the car. Two single bedrooms each with regular double beds, and a master bedroom with shower annex. Office room, kitchen and dining room. This last sported gleaming silver in SP pattern and a table for six. Oak grain panneling throughout. One reason railroad officials are treated like government heads is that they play the role. I thanked the attendant and left the heavyweight car. Now, passing through the GWT equipment, I'd have a good chance to see the cars from the inside. The first one here was "Golden Gate." The old name was "Samuel King Tigrett," ex-GM&O 4 sec, 8 rmt, 1 cpt, 3 dbr -- built by ACF in 1950. It used to be on the MIDNIGHT SPECIAL. The car was full of happy tourers, mostly of an older age. Next came the "Silver Canyon." This still said "California Zephyr" on its fluted sides -- a 10-6. The "Redwood" was next, a 5 dbr, buffet-lounge (ex-UP, built by P-S in 1956). Redwood panelling and atmosphere in this car. I even recall a potted palm. There was a map showing the route of this tour. Into Mexico at El Paso, down the CHP via Nuevo Casa Grandes, and then down the coast towards Mexico City, but taking an exotic turn. At Celaya, the route took the old line via Tuloca with a Morelia side trip. Afterwards, the GWT cars would go all the way to Merida and back. Quite a trip. Mr. J. St. Clair, travel supervisor, extended his hosptality and answered my questions. "Imperial Sands" was the next pullman, an ex-UP 4 cpt, 2 dr. rm, 4 dbr affair built by P-S in 1942. "Adventure-Nomad" is a twin-unit diner-lounge -- kitchen-dorm (ex-UP 5106a-5106b built by ACF in 1953 for CITY OF DENVER). It was good to get an inside look at GWT.

As we streaked across the New Mexico desert, I poked around my car. Seems it was refurbished at Beach Grove 10/73. Too bad the name wasn't retained on its side. It had been running before on the STARLIGHT, flashing its name in Big Sky Blue. We passed #1 at Strauss -- 3:20 pm., just a few miles from El Paso, and were in on time. A notice inside the waiting room proclaimed the intention of the terminal company to abandon operations and the station. Outside, the GWT cars were abandoning our train. A switcher took them over to one of the stub tracks and parked. Then it was discovered that the cars needed watering, so back went the tour equipment to our track. As #2 departed, the switcher pushed them to where we had been to get the water connections. A roar up ahead and I turned in my position at the dutch-door. Around the curve next to our train came an SP freight barrelling along, headlight gleaming and engine working hard. A fine sight of big time railroading! Oops. I forgot about my camera in hand and missed a good picture. Past the yards now and I spot some old FM switchers lined in a row. And, here's another one working. That's good. A couple of RI units burble and there's an SP Crocodile Alco.

The call came through the train at 4:30 that the early-bird dinner was now being served. I asked the attendant why he didn't use the chimes. "Oh, I'm not the musical type." Trying to wash up in my bedroom, I discovered no water pressure. Upon

checking, it was determined that back at El Paso, one of the car knockers had failed to turn the water valve back on. It's turned off at each filling, I understand, to prevent toilets from spitting back and/or bursting pipes. About 15 miles out, the train made a special stop so Mr. Bookman could walk along the ties and flip the valve. It took about 20 seconds. Dinner in the diner, facing forward -- ordering from the paper-towel menus of 1972 with food listed at the old prices. The swiss steak, baked potato with apple pie and cheese tasted very good.

At this point, it might be well to make a comment aimed at the Lucius Beebe type of train rider: Train travel today should not be compared to train travel in the past -- it just isn't fair to do so. Transportation in the 1970's is more spartan than even the last decade. This applies to air and bus travel as well. No longer is it reasonable to expect impeccable service, outstanding food, and proper atmosphere when riding a train. Do not be disappointed if the dining car does not feature finger bowls and after-dinner mints. Forget it if your roomette pushbuttons emit silence, not music. Don't despair if you have to do your own waitering in a lounge car. If the coach lights are left on past 11 pm.; if your window is dirty; or if there is no dome car when there should be -- take it easy. Remember that everybody has problems that won't go away, others are already complaining, and it's still worse on a bus. Taking a balanced view, however, we observe that dining car tables all have <u>real</u> flowers -- always carnations. And how about those almonds with every drink? Definately an Amtrak tradition. And the Amtrak pot of coffee holds two full cups, not a cup and a half as with the old glass bottle.

Thinking these thoughts, I had gone forward and inspected the high-level coaches, then visited with the conductor in his cubicle, downstairs of the lead car. The track was decidedly worse east of El Paso, with more rocking and pitching motions. Valentine was reached at 8:16 pm, and Alpine at 9:21. Returning to "Bois De Sioux River," I found Mr. Bookman reading -- with my permission -- the Cars and Consists book. He enjoyed recalling the old cars he had worked over many railroads. Seems he'd even been on the 20th CENTURY LIMITED back in the days. "What's your favorite type of sleeper?" "Well," he said, "I don't rightly have much preference, although Pullman-Standard cars are easier to make up. Budd seems to have a more complicated procedure with its beds."

Early morning wakeup came before 5. My shoes, left in the locker, were shined! Ah, yes indeed, a good train, nice sleeper and competent porter. A larger than usual tip as I alighted at 5:34 am -- San Antonio, Texas. I attempted some time exposure photos as #2 was serviced, then she took off and left me alone in the night. I now had eight full hours to wait for connections.

San Antonio on a Sunday morning seemed a dreary place, walking in a questionable neighborhood at dawn. The Alamo City has done some nice work with its river. Special shops and restaurants front the water, all on a lower level from the hustle of the city. Stone arch bridges and many varieties of trees create a restful and relaxing River Walk. Nothing about but pidgeons this morning. A leisurely breakfast, a long walk along the river and taking my time got me back to the SP Depot with hours to spare.

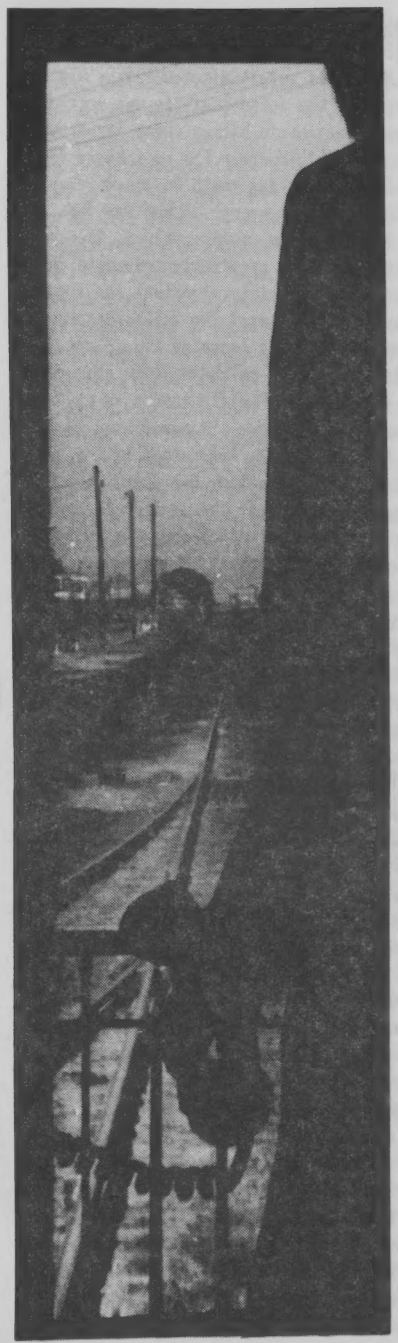
A number of freights crashed by as I waited. By 12:00 a number of people had drifted in. The local city buses were on strike, so Amtrak took the dozen or so of us over in private cars. This was to the old International & Great Northern station used by the Mopac, and where I'd gone south last year into Mexico. Today, #22, the INTER-AMERICAN, arrived 13 minutes lat at 1:28 pm. I checked the consist. Two

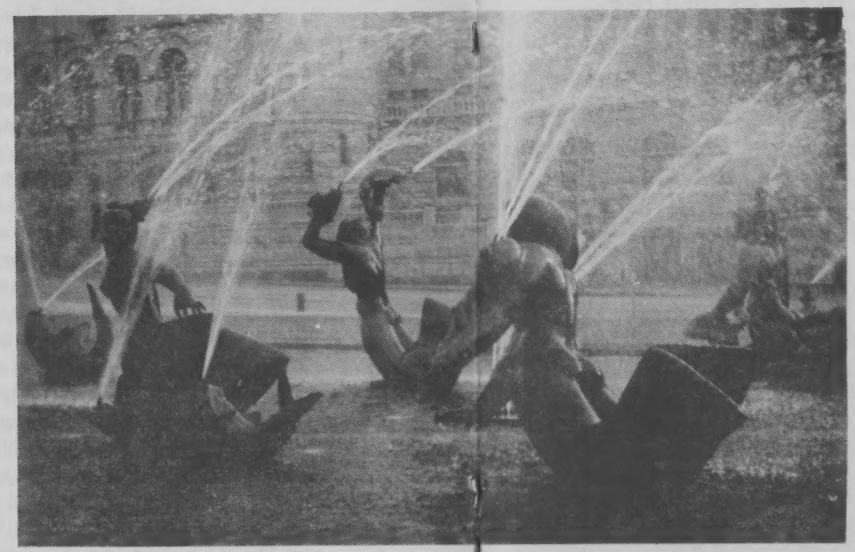
E9a's #405 (ex-Milw) and 416 (ex-UP); coach 4437 (ex-SP); 5262 (ex-C&O); diner 8323 (SP 10410, coffeeshop-lounge); sleeper 2686 (SP 9006); baggage-dorm 1412 (ex-Army). My space was roomette 7, rolling backwards. We pulled out 24 minutes late. One of the coaches was running hot and at San Marcos it was found that a/c was turned to "off" position. We moved along at a moderate pace up to Milano where the crew changed. Here #22 turns north over the Santa Fe to Ft. Worth. The switchover took 10 minutes, and shortly we met #15, the LONE STAR, barreling south in the thickening gloom. She shot past at 5:30 pm. No dome-obs. on it, however. Dinner was fine with hamburger steak complete, including pie and ice cream costing only $2.15. Amtrak blue linen was on the table this evening. A close examination revealed the old NP Monad peeping through the blue dye. Service was fairly atrocious, so I gave no tip. I sat in the lounge and nursed a Pepsi. Walking past the tables later, the waiter said in a loud, accusing voice: "..some people don't leave no tip.." etc.

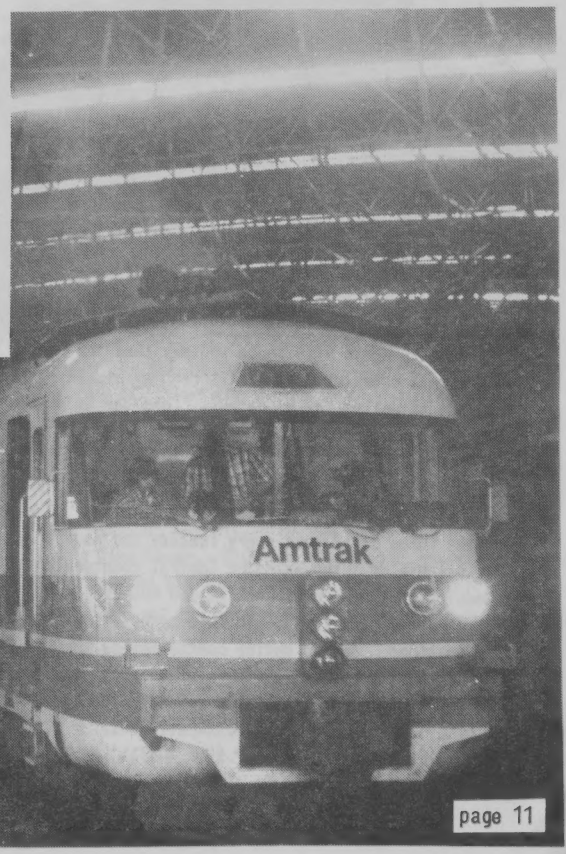
We arrived and left Ft. Worth 1 hour late. Here, the INTER-AMERICAN changed direction and my roomette was facing forward ontp Texas & Pacific tracks, a new railroad for me. An hour later, we slowly came into Dallas. I'd never been to this city and my first thoughts went back to Nov. 22, 1963. And darned if the train didn't cross right over next to the Texas School Book Depository Building. The overpass in all the newsphotos was the <u>railroad</u> overpass! At the station, a new complex of office buildings and such is under construction. 10:55 pm. was pullout time, 55 min. late. T&P track east of here was smooth and fast. My sleep was restful and deep. The scene upon awakening was one of pine trees, low grass and occa sional poor farms. Arkansas by any guess. But where? We were wheeling right along, too, 60-70 m.p.h. Whizzzzz as a Mopac freight went by. After he cleared a town came up: Judsonia... and at about 8:00 am. Not bad. We pulled to a stop at Newport at 8:35 am. and had to wait five minutes for time. A full hour made up already. I noted the Frisco crossover at Hoxie and the red-brick streets of Poplar Bluff. It was chilly this morning and we left on time. The track is very twisty-turny above Poplar Bluff, and there is much padding all the way to St. Louis. We paralleled the Black River for a while in woodsy country, passing an occasional orange-jacketed hunter on the prowl. Our progress was slow and up grade. 40 miles later, we sped up a bit over this, the Iron Mountain section of the Mopac.

At Dallas last night, I had seen a leaky water seal under my pullman, and this morning there was no water at all. Later, as a change of pace, I sampled my first Amtrak lunch of the trip: the soup and sandwich special with tapioca pudding and coffee. All for a mere $1.91. I noticed menu holders from the Seaboard and Atlantic Coast Line -- everything else on the table was Amtrak. Short delays, slow orders, and a red signal brought us into St. Louis at 2:57 pm., 27 minutes down. It was sad to see all the ripped up track leading to the great and leaky trainshed at Union Station and sadder still to see only a couple of tracks in use under that vast canopy. 36 tracks once teemed with all sorts of variegated passenger trains. The ticket counter sported a large mural above it depicting an early steam-power train. The upstairs waiting room is deserted and echos years of dusty past memories. The Terminal Hotel is closed. But outside across the avenue, the fountains are on. This is rare! I hustle over and frame a few shots with the station in the background. Moorish architecture and Railroad Gothic, I'd say.

Back inside, a fair-sized crowd gathers. At 4:05 pm., the gates open and with a boarding pass, I scurry down the platform and up into the French Turbos and select



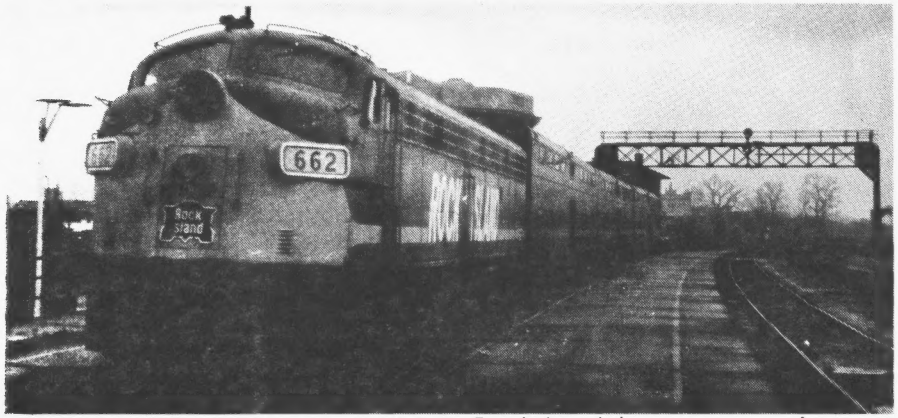




Some of the sights Peter Bretz saw on his cross-country journey to Amtrak headquarters: At left, a trainman, train telephone in hand, gazes out the rear of SP business car #117 "Tucson" on the SUNSET LIMITED leaving Tucson. At top, the STATE HOUSE, a 5-car train hauled by Amtrak SDP40F diesel #646, moves northward into Joliet, IL on Nov. 19. Above and right: a bit of Europe in mid-America--fountains at St. Louis depot, and inside the station, a French Turbo prepares for its 4:25pm departure for Chicago on Nov. 18.

a window seat on the left hand side. Not that it matters; the run to Chicago is mostly in darkness. #304 Turbo Service has the "B" set this trip: Power coach #62; Coach 93; coach-buffet 94; coach 95; and power-coach 63 designated as B-1 thru B-5. Glide-out took place right at 4:25 pm., but after crossing the Mississippi River bridge, we sat 8 minutes to let a T.R.R.A. 46-car freight pass by. Alton 22 min. late at 5:32; 27 late at Springfield; 30 min. late at Bloomington, but a mere 12 min. late at Joliet.

This was my first ride on the RTG train and I was impressed. I liked the orange seats and the slide-forward type of reclining. It's good for a short corridor run. The nets behind the seats are handy, as is the horizontal bar across the wide and high windows. The seats are not placed in line with the windows, and I think this is a drawback. It's too much like sitting in a Penn Central corridor coach that used to be a 21-roomette car and has windows for such. The ride was fairly rough. I will attribute that to track mostly, although we were really rocketing along. Service in the buffet car went well, but crowded. I enjoyed picking frozen food off shelves, automat style. And the quality of the meals was very good. The snack bar attendant kept saying to everyone "Thank you, uh. Oh yes, thank you, uh." Distinctive.



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Next morning, I was trackside in time to watch the STATE HOUSE ramble in. A new SDP40F handled it. Eating facilities consisted of one 46-seat coach snack-bar car. After that, #301 pulled in 20 min. late. Conventional equipment was subbing for the Turbo as it does every Tuesday and Wednesday. I was pleased to see "Dixie Traveler," the ex-Maine Central counter-lounge car. More activity was scheduled in the form of Rock Island ROCKETS, but both were late because of a common RI occurence: derailment. In this case, a freight down the line, so the two trains were combined. Also a notice posted inside the station warned riders that all Rock Island trains were subject to delay on account of recent heavy rains and weak track.

The ROCKETS still hadn't arrived by 10:15 when I left aboard my own Rock Island "Rocket." This was a 3-car push-pull commuter with E #662 on the rear. All cars were double decker built by P-S in 1970. The lead unit was bright red coach-cab #115.

I stood at the front door window the whole way into Chicago. We stopped at every station to Blue Island, then ran up the suburban line via Beverly Hills. The track here is very bad with 10 m.p.h. top speed. But it doesn't matter much, as stations are two minutes apart.

At Gresham Jct., back on the main again, we passed a southbound local. There on the point was the famous E-6 still in its gold paint job. Approaching Chicago, we passed Englewood, the station from which I would alight from the PACEMAKER when I visited my grandparents in Homewood. The engine house behind was where I last glimpsed a NYC Niagra with steam up in 1955. We didn't even slow down today, and there were many broken windows. We clicked past a tower labelled "New York Central-Rock Island Lines." The NYC part was painted over. Then, at La Salle Street, I saw the ROCKET equipment that had somehow slipped past us, being pulled out for service. I noted the lack of a parlor car on the Peoria section. But "Big Ben," the ex-D&RGW dome was still there. And so was the "Track 10" restaurant utilizing the old ex-CENTURY mid-train lounge car "Atlantic Shore." Renamed "Pacific Shore," it ran on the QUAD CITIES ROCKET before the coming of the dome.

I lingered around the station for a few minutea, soaking up memories, then took a short ride on the CTA. After that, there was just time to walk over to Union Station and catch my train. Number 50, the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, was due to leave at 2:05 pm., but when 1:50 came and went with no announcement, I walked out to track 26 to see for myself. No train. It wasn't until 1:55, ten minutes before departure, that the equipment slowly backed in. The delay, it turned out, was that the sleeper had been bad ordered at the last minute and a substitute made. Ironically, the b/o car was a 10-6 (#2683 ex-SP 9003) not normally assigned to #50, and the sub was one of the regular 16-4 cars. Now, what name would it be? I'd been in "Oriole," so didn't want that one. "Kingfisher" and "Mockingbird" (my favorites) belong to Ringling Bros. Circus, so that's out. The 16 dp-rmt, 4 dbr backing in was "Gull." Unfortunately, the train had been washed before the switch was made, and "Gull" was filthy. I grabbed a step ladder and paper towels and washed the window myself. It was on the off side of the car and next to a high level platform.

Train 50 checked out as follows: Gray and Blue B&O E9a#1457; ATK#400 (ex-B&O 1454); coaches 5668 and 5657 (both NYC 2900-series); 8110 (ex-Santa Fe lunch-counter-diner); "Gull;" and baggage 1307 (army kitchen car). I settled in upper duplex-roomette # 12 and we were off at 2:09, just 4 minutes behind. I was very interested now in what route we'd take out of Chicago to get to the C&O track at Griffith, Ind. Rolling down the Pennsy, we stopped at 40th St. Tower and backed up over to the parallel C&WI. Heading out again, we passed an E-L freight and an L&N freight. Not having my Chicago RR Map with me made it a little confusing, but my notes bring out that we remained on the C&WI past 83rd St. Yard, then onto the Belt Railway next to the Rock Island, over the IC electric to Pullman Jct., where we crossed over the N&W (NKP) and were back on C&WI tracks. We picked up the South Shore a ways (no trains), but left it at State Line Tower. 3:00 pm. at Hammond, we said goodbye to the NKP and parallel L&N (Monon) and hit the Erie-Lackawanna to Griffith. After clumping across the Penn Central, EJ&E and the Gr and Trunk, we headed out on the Chessie System's own main with good roadbed.

At La Crosse, here's the ex-Pennsy line to Indianapolis -- the old condemned track that the FLORIDIAN still uses. It was right next to us as far as North Judson, and double track all the way. It looked almost as bad as the Rock Island suburban line, but not quite. Two PC freights were passed just outside N. Judson, moving

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slowly. At the C&O yards north of Peru, we stopped and watered the locomotives. Nine minutes later, we eased down to the station. We sat from 6:09 pm. to 6:40 pm. waiting for time. Quite the reverse of the old JWR route. Three or four people got on and two got off. We passed Marion at 7:20 and arrived Muncie 7:57. Five made the bus connection to Indianapolis and a dozen got on. A passenger was heard to remark "I've just had a wonderful train ride." Muncie was left at 8:05. Rain began at this point, and I sat down at a lunch-counter seat for dinner. Ah Ha! Waitresses! This was a first for me, although I've since seen one on the COAST STARLIGHT. She suggested the strawberry shortcake, which tasted fine. Back in "Gull," it was hot and muggy, yet the a/c couldn't be activated, just the blower. Why? Standing orders are to drain the freon November first to prevent damage during winter. The rain today made it just a little too warm, I guess. Speaking of warmth, no blankets were made available for coach passengers. In fact, none were to be had on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED a few weeks before, nor on other trains. Something for me to check into when I get to Washington.

On time leaving Richmond, and into the small River Road station at Cincinnati at 10:46. As we backed in, I could see the dark silhouette of the Union Terminal rotunda leering up against the sky. Will Amtrak ever move back in? It's possible.

Now a problem here, a sticking brake shoe on the diner. Bang Bang... CLUNK CLUNK. "Can you see anything, Joe?..."Shine the light under here a minute.." Hammer Hammer. The upshot was the removal of the shoe, but rummaging around through the pile of new ones on the platform, nothing would fit this 1950 P-S car. So out came the welding equipment, and after many sparks, the shoe fit and the diner wore it.

The JWR took off into the night at 11:33, 28 minutes late. Down along the Ohio River, we ran into a thunder and lightning storm. The crashes and flashes illuminated Kentucky woods and wet houses. And the track was terrible. The Chessie's glass smooth roadbed sure wasn't. Perhaps "Gull" was partly at fault, but I was tossed and bounced and didn't get much sleep. But in the morning, my raised shade showed Staunton, Virginia at 8:52 am., right on time again. Still plenty of rain. Ham and scrambled eggs later, we crossed the Southern at Charlottesville Union Station. After 6 minutes waiting for time, two more brought us to Main Street Station at 9:52. The rain was still falling, but I was out watching switching operations. The Richmond section got #1750 "Silver Spring" (ex-B&O dorm-baggage-lounge) plus ex-C&O coach 5239. The private car "Lionel Ives" was switched into our train here. This was the ex-Pennsy "Alder Falls," a 6-dbr buffet-lounge, which ran as mid-train lounge on the BROADWAY LIMITED of 1960.

The owner gave me a quick tour of the car, which was set up with model locos and photographs, some old-style marker lamps, plus a train telephone. All very tastefully done. We were off on the advertised, and at Orange began smooth running over Southern tracks. At Calverton, 39 miles later, the southbound PIEDMONT eased past. Four covered wagons, baggage, coaches, heavyweight diner-lounge, plus 8 piggybacks. Packing up in the "Gull" and changing out of my "train slippers," I noticed that Mr. Sweeney, the porter, had shined my shoes.

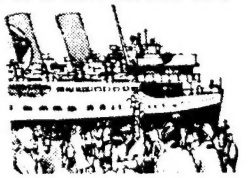
Alexandria came at 12:20, where we passed Southern Lynchburg turn. One heavyweight olive-drab coach filled with smiling kids. We crossed the Potomac and I looked for Amtrak headquarters but didn't recognize it. Out of the tunnel and into Washington Union Station at 12:39 pm., six minutes to the good. I put my bags in a locker, looked at the great hole in the center of the waiting room, and took a bus toward the SW to check in at 955 L'Enfant Plaza and the wonderful world of Amtrak. Little did I know the surprises and revelations that awaited me...

Rail Canada

CP RAIL FILED a notice with the Canadian Transport Commission this month of a 15% fare increase on all its intercity passenger trains, effective Jan. 15. First class fares will go up about 21%, and there will be a 50% surcharge on transcontinental sleeping accommodations June 1-September 15. The lowest Montreal-Vancouver economy day fare will go from $93.10 to $107.

FORMER CTC PRESIDENT J. W. "Honest Jack" Pickersgill called for a phaseout of Canadian rail passenger trains at a speech at Carleton University in Ottawa. Quote: "I object to taxpayers having to pay for those comparatively few wealthy travelers who take trains between a few big cities. I don't think anyone would miss them (the trains)." In reply, the Toronto Globe & Mail charged editorially that Pickersgill himself had placed Canadians in the position of having to pay more for inferior train service; that the subsidies are an inevitable cost of Confederation in a thinly-populated country; and that increases to patrons would increase regional disparities. The Globe defended passenger trains on energy efficiency.

B.C. TRANSPORT MINISTER Robert Strachan on Dec. 19 told the Victoria Tourist Bureau that the provincial government would not take over the "Princess Marguerite" steamer to resume Victoria-Seattle service. But shortly after, Premier Dave Barrett told the Victoria Chamber of Commerce that the government would consider such a move. C-of-C officials stressed losses of up to $5 million in tourist revenues if the ex-CP Rail service were not continued. A spokesman in Barrett's office said it would be hard to predict when the Premier would announce a decision. It is known that a number of cabinet ministers are in favour of retaining the ship, despite Strachan's adamant refusal to consider the matter.



B.C.'s NEW LUXURY ferry "Queen of Surrey" (ex-Stena Danica) was withdrawn from service in mid-December following an engine room fire said to be concentrated in electrical gear. Damage was not serious, and the vessel was back on the Vancouver-Nanaimo run after a few days of repair work.

GO TRANSIT OFFICIALS in Toronto are reported considering a shift in terminals at Hamilton, Ontario, western end of the Lakeshore commuter district. Under the plan, GO trains would operate into the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo (CP Rail) station, closer to the downtown area and to city buses than the existing CN station. The decision to electrify the GO-Transit route on CN's Lakeshore line between Oakville and Pickering has been made. The decision will not be officially announced until CN engineering department selects a voltage, and the government decides among plant and power distribution alternatives.

NEW STREETCAR SYSTEM for Victoria is coming up: Municipal Affairs Minister James Lorimer announced Dec. 13 the 10-year plan for establishing a light rail transit system between the island city and its suburbs. Existing and abandoned rail lines will be used.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS may have a profitable year in 1975, the first in almost 20 years, predicted CN president Robert Bandeen on Dec. 9. While the railway usually has an operating profit, it is stuck with interest payments on a long-term debt from the 1920's which create a deficit situation. Bandeen stressed that the railway should be recompensed for deficit operations which it is required to maintain in the public interest.

CANADIAN NEWS BRIEFS: Toronto Transit Commission has initiated a long-term lease for two more Peter Witt cars for Tour Tram and charter use. Both cars are "Large Witts"; car 2300 comes from the rail museum at St. Constant, P.Q., and car 2424 from the museum at Rockwood, Ont.... The proposed $1.5-billion Metro Centre for Toronto has been indefinitely shelved because of city inaction... "The Quebec Arrow," a winter excursion with private cars from New York City to the Quebec Winter Carnival, leaves Feb. 11. Info from: George A. Pins, 350 Fifth Ave., Suite 2612, New York, NY 10001, USA... Premier Allan Blakeny of Saskatchewan recently suggested that the 4 Western provinces take over all railways in Western Canada to improve efficiency and promote regional development...

mixed train of thoughts

LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM may be in the offing for San Diego, CA. A report this month told the city that a streetcar system would cost only 1/4 as much as a BART-type system, and would be almost as effective. Various plans call for laying new track or utilizing that of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railroad..... IN LOS ANGELES, meanwhile, faced with a more complicated situation, Mayor Bradley is calling for alternate sources of funding, following the defeat of the November bond issue, and is pressing to explore use of existing tracks for streetcars, improvements in bus service, and planning for a downtown "people mover"..... NATIONAL VISITOR CENTER work at Washington's Union Station will resume early in 1975, the Interior Dept. announced Dec. 18. Work was halted earlier because of a legal dispute between Amtrak and the station owners. A new passenger station will be built north of the present station, while the existing building becomes a tourist reception and orientation center..... AN IMPORTANT ARTICLE highly critical of Amtrak management appeared in U.S. News & World Report (Dec. 30). In essence it blamed Roger Lewis for lack of planning, and the corporation in general for cutting costs and services as if ridership were going to diminish, when indicators say that winter travel will be heavy this year (just wait until Pres. Ford's energy-saving plans are made known). It criticized the coming downgrading of Florida trains and the spartan quality of equipment on order. "We're all sitting here waiting for... a new man to come in and clean house," an Amtrak staffer is quoted as saying, referring to the effort to find a replacement for Roger Lewis..... A FREIGHT DERAILMENT on CP Rail's transcon line near Redcliff, Alberta on Dec. 6 resulted in passenger train detours thru Lethbridge..... THE ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, in freezing weather, passed through Galesburg, IL early in December without heat or lights; the train's electric generator set had failed en route..... SANTA CLAUS SPECIAL run by BN and Amtrak Dec. 8 for elderly and handicapped Seattle-area residents on a circle tour to Renton, Bellevue, Everett and Edmonds, included the following consist: E units 341, 334; articulated coaches 7522/7521; 7527/7526; GN coaches 1078, 1097; and 7519 & 7503..... RAIL BOOSTER GROUP, "The Friends of the 508," in Kingston, RI will sponsor a race between a high-powered Datsun auto and train 508, the only commuter train in the area, subsidized by the state of Rhode Island..... "AMTRAK NEWS" EDITOR Joseph Vranich spoke to the NRHS Roanoke Chapter Dec. 19 about the coming Norfolk-Roanoke-Cincinnati train, which will provide thru service to Chicago in conjunction with the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. The train is expected to run by end of next March, and will consist of 5 cars: 2 coaches, diner-lounge, sleeper, baggage-dorm. Amtrak will build a new station in Roanoke (as well as in Lynchburg) at Shenandoah & 4th Sts., N.W. Connections to Florida can be made, but 2 stations will be used in Petersburg, requiring a transfer. At Lynchburg, connections to Southern Railway will be available (with a change of stations). Meanwhile, however, Southern is announcing service cutbacks (see separate news item).....

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FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION officials must have had red faces after the ABC TV News Closeup program "Crashes: the illusion of safety" aired on Dec. 28. The network program painted a picture of the FAA as a do-nothing agency while hazards mount (this year was the worst in airline history worldwide--over 1200 people died in planes). The report also covered rail transportation of hazardous materials, but concentrated only on tank car construction, not mentioning bad track problems. The program staff called for the "total reorganization" of the FAA and the nation's transportation safety agencies..... NORTHBOUND SAN DIEGAN, train 775, struck an empty auto at Santa Fe Springs at 7pm on Dec. 6, without injuries..... THE SUPREME COURT on Dec. 16 pronounced constitutional the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973, thus removing a legal hurdle to reorganization of bankrupt Northeast railroads.....

PRESIDENT FORD DEDICATED the American Freedom Train on Dec. 19 at Alexandria, VA. The train dedicated actually was the "Preamble Express" (see photos in RTN, First September issue). Reports of the event primarily mentioned the activity of hecklers demonstrating for economic reforms..... NEW YORK TIMES devoted one long column (Dec. 29) to the retirement of Harold J. Pryor, chairman of the United Transportation Union of the LIRR for 21 years, who was an outspoken instigator of strikes and slowdowns on the system in the interests of worker economics..... GRAND CENTRAL STATION in New York will be torn down, it is likely (is nothing sacred?), since a state Supreme Court judge has ruled that owner Penn Central can do so to let a British investor build a highrise office building that the New York Times described as "enormously unsuitable" (NYT, Dec. 22). The case has been pending for 5 years since the Landmarks Commission entered the case. New York magazine was outraged (quote: "It is a soft-headed fallacy to believe that our cities exist to perpetuate civilization. They really exist to make money...")..... AMTRAK MAY CHANGE its advertising agency from Ted Bates & Co. to J. Walter Thompson Co. as the new year begins..... A FINAL STEP to acquire and develop the Santa Fe station in San Diego, CA was taken Dec. 12 when the city voted to do a $20,000 structural analysis on the building. The mission-style depot, used by Amtrak, is to become a transportation-visitor center. And the old Western Pacific station in Oakland, CA was saved from destruction in 1974 when it was named as Oakland's first historical landmark and turned into a spaghetti restaurant. Near year-end, 8 more structures were so designated..... ROCK ISLAND LINES and the ICG late in December asked the Regional Transportation Authority for $11.2 million to subsidize commuter deficits..... A WINTER SNOWFALL on Dec. 28 closed Interstate 5 for a while thru the Tehachapis in Southern California--the route traversed by Greyhound buses connecting the Southland with Amtrak's SAN JOAQUIN. Amtrak, yielding to railroad pressure, elected not to run trains along the entire San Joaquin route to Los Angeles, thus making the precarious highway connection necessary..... BEGINNING JANUARY FIRST, BART riders can purchase $3 permits to carry bicycles with them at non-rush hours. The number of permits is limited....

* * *

ROBERT W. DOWNING, Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of BN, will replace Louis Menk on Amtrak's Board of Directors. Leon F. Jackson, who comes to Amtrak from the airlines, has been appointed Manager of Market Research..... THE DEL MONTE is coming closer to a revival. Equipment has been located to reinstitute the San Francisco-Monterey run, in the form of 4 passenger cars owned by the Stockton Terminal and Eastern Railway. A bill is now being planned to assist in using state funds to underwrite the new service..... PAUL H. REISTRUP is reportedly willing to take over the presidency of Amtrak, provided the salary can be set above $60,000 (he now earns $69,000 yearly with ICG). Unfortunately, the Surface Transportation Act, which contained the authorization for the increase, could not be passed before Congress adjourned in December. If Reistrup does not take the post, other close contenders are Samuel L. Higginbottom, an ousted Eastern Airlines president who has the support of Roger Lewis and Claude Brinegar; and Paul F. Cruikshank, Jr., formerly president of the Ft. Worth and Denver Railway, and now a vice president of the U.S. Railway Association. The bill to raise Amtrak executive salaries allows them to go from $60,000 to a top of $85,000 yearly..... AMTRAK'S CONTROVERSIAL "MIAMIAN" train, whichbegan runs Dec. 13, carried only 21 coach and 9 sleeper passengers the first day (on train 89). The schedule misses the important cities of Richmond, Raleigh, Columbia and Orlando..... THE CONSISTS OF the first winter Florida trains (for Dec. 13) were as follows: train 81: units 639 & 611; cars 1165, 1404, 8061, 2801, 2815, 5458, 4553, 4573, 3409, 8012, 4582, 4465, 4402, 4580, 2684, 2812. Train 89: units 549 & 548; cars 1408, 5409, 5684, 5630, 8015, 3406, 2769, 2690. Train 83: cars 1407, 2029, 4576, 4595, 4592, 4419, 3311, 8023, 2780, 2692, 3200, 2232. Train 85: units 541 & 550; cars 1097, 1518, 2030, 2691, 2791, 3202, 2380, 8080, 4444, 4409, 4427, 4458, 4587, 4591, 3342..... AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION raised fares on the Washington-Florida route in December.....

(continued from page 3)
improvements. But despite this general increase in the level of service, we feel that Amtrak is perceived as slowly moving toward a time when every train will look like an airliner. The glamour captured by Auto-Train, for example, seems clearly missing in the operations of Amtrak.

The new president of Amtrak must learn from the outset that what rail travelers want the LEAST is dull uniformity. It is not necessary to settle for uniformity just because some of the money comes thru taxpayer channels. Amtrak's job is to get as many travelers off the highways as possible, in the best interests of an energy-conserving nation. Amtrak knows that one of the most important reasons for voluntarily choosing rail travel (as opposed to being forced to ride faceless troop trains) is to see the scenery and bask in the fun and glamour of train travel. And knowing this, why is Amtrak removing its passenger service representatives and on-board service directors? Why isn't it planning to build more dome cars for the citizens of this nation to see their country? Why is it so lax in regional supervision of its employees that their morale is low and they show a poor face to the riding public? In short, why does Amtrak seem to continue its earlier policy of keeping a low profile, as if the trains might go away if they're made unattractive enough, and we'd be rid of another taxpayer burden?

The trains are now clearly vital to our national well-being, and it will take a good bit of catching up to undo the laxity and lack of foresight of Amtrak's first years. With the nation's bicentennial approaching, and new leadership about to take over these important transportation posts, we would like to suggest some goals to aim for--goals that will add some pride in our country to citizens shaken by a series of bungling, incompetent federal administrations.

We should be aiming for a nationwide system of high-speed electrified rail lines patterned after the European model. There are many ways such a system could be built, using both public and private resources. Such a system would, for one thing, free us from a dependence upon oil in the rail industry, since electric trains can be powered from multiple fuel sources.

We suggest the designing of a Bicentennial Passenger Car--a low-profile dome car to be configured either as a coach or lounge, or possibly as dome sleeper or diner. Such a car could run over most of the nation's system and, we are convinced, would do more than any other single improvement to add glamour to the Amtrak system and attract riders to the rails. (Domes and dining are the two features always mentioned by rail travelers. Amtrak has done a good job in improving rail dining--perhaps its greatest success; now it needs to concentrate on the dome viewing feature.) If it's thought that taxpayers would revolt at paying for such "frills," some imaginative person could find ways of voluntary fund-raising to pay the extra construction costs of domes. If every ardent railfan, for example, contributed a small amount to obtain a certificate of contribution to the building of a Bicentennial Car, there would probably be enough money thus generated to make up the difference. (Perhaps large donors could have a car named after themselves.)

What we need in the rail travel field are more people of imagination, and especially of determination to see that the renaissance of the rails is properly brought about. Whatever happened to all those exciting ideas of Harold Graham's published in Saturday Review back in 1971? Why can't Amtrak operate with the glamour of Auto-Train? When will Amtrak achieve the savoir faire of Canadian National? When will we have trains as good as Europe's?

The American people deserve more than troop trains. Our public transportation system reflects the manner in which we regard each other. If we don't give a hoot about our fellow man, we're indifferent to the manner of conveyance he rides in. As we move out of the age of auto-mania and into the age of renewed rail travel, we need to realize that the glamour and status conferred by fancy cars now must be provided by public transportation vehicles that are more than just utilitarian. We hope that men of imagination will see this and act upon it.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO SUBSCRIBERS

Effective January 14, 1975, with the publication of our next issue, the yearly subscription rate of RTN will be increased to $8.00. This change is necessary in order to keep pace with the continued inflationary costs of production, and to forestall problems due to planned postal rate increases in 1975.

RTN is underpriced, even at its new $8.00 per year rate. We compared costs of other railfan newsmagazines of comparable page size and mail delivery, and found the following: magazine X costs 2¢ per page (based on number of pages in 1974);
magazine Y costs 2.1¢ per page;
magazine Z costs 3.1¢ per page.
In comparison, RTN, at its present rate, costs only 1.4¢ per page, and at its new eight-dollar rate costs only 1.6¢ per page. In 1974 we published a total of 496 jam-packed pages of news and entertainment. Our calculations assume that our magazine size will remain the same as in 1974; however, it is highly probably that our total page output will be higher in 1975, thus making RTN an even bigger bargain.

A number of magazines have recently adopted RTN's pocket-size format. We are flattered at this imitation, and we urge you to read them, as many are quite interesting. However, we hope you'll continue to find RTN indispensable. Until our next issue appears, you can still subscribe at the old $7-per-year rate (this rate good for first class delivery in North America and third-class delivery to most overseas locations; check with us for other rates).

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